UN MENSAJE DE LA PRESIDENTA

Los padres y las familias son una parte increíblemente importante de la comunidad de SDSU. Los vemos como socios en el éxito de nuestros estudiantes. Debido a que su presencia y sus muchas contribuciones son tan integrales para el éxito de cada uno de nuestros estudiantes y nuestra universidad, le agradezco por las muchas formas en que se asocia con nuestra facultad y personal.

A medida que continuamos fortaleciendo la experiencia de los estudiantes y el impacto regional, existen muchas oportunidades para que participen como un miembro de nuestra comunidad de SDSU. Y dado nuestro progreso e hitos, hay mucho por lo que todos deberíamos estar orgullosos. Con la inauguración del Estadio Snapdragon en Septiembre, continuamos con el progreso para construir SDSU Mission Valley, incluyendo el Distrito de Innovacion y River Park, dos proyectos importantes que ya están en marcha. En SDSU Imperial Valley, y con una nueva asignación de $80 millones en fondos del estado, estamos avanzando hacia la creación de un centro de innovación de ciencias, tecnología, ingeniería y matemáticas (STEM) para la enseñanza, el aprendizaje, la investigación y las asociaciones.

También continuamos progresando en las metas de nuestro plan estratégico, con la adición de nuevos programas académicos y eventos centrados en estudiantes para ayudarlos a sentirse más conectados. Ahora, más del 60% de nuestras metas se han completado. A través de nuestro plan estratégico, también hemos contratado nuevos profesores y personal, ampliamos el asesoramiento para estudiantes e introdujimos más servicios de apoyo, incluyendo aquellos diseñados con la seguridad y el bienestar en mente.

Los invitó a encontrar formas significativas de conectarse con la comunidad de nuestro campus, especialmente mientras continuamos con las celebraciones de nuestro 125 aniversario de este año académico. Nosotros necesitamos sus perspectivas e ideas para fortalecer nuestra familia Azteca, la experiencia de los estudiantes y la capacidad de nuestra facultad y personal para continuar haciendo contribuciones significativas en los años venideros. Para obtener información sobre cómo participar, comuníquese con la Asociación de Padres Aztecas, una organización de voluntarios, al 619-594-1653 para obtener más detalles.

Nuevamente, y en nombre de nuestra comunidad de SDSU global, les agradezco por ayudarnos a reimaginar el futuro de SDSU a medida que marca el camino para el éxito de nuestros estudiantes.

Sinceramente,

Adela de la Torre, Ph.D.
Presidenta de la Universidad Estatal de San Diego
Parents and families are an incredibly important part of the SDSU community. We see you as partners in the success of our students. Because your presence and your many contributions are so integral to the success of each of our students and our university, I thank you for the many ways you partner with our faculty and staff.

As we continue to strengthen the student experience and our regional impact, there are many opportunities for you to engage in as a member of our One SDSU community. And given our progress and milestones, there is so much for which we should all be proud. With the opening of Snapdragon Stadium in September, we are continuing with progress to build SDSU Mission Valley, including the Innovation District and River Park – two important projects now underway. At SDSU Imperial Valley, and with a new allocation of $80 million in funding from the state, we are making progress toward creating a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) innovation hub for teaching, learning, research and partnerships.

We also continue to make progress on our strategic plan goals, with the addition of new academic programs and student-centered events to help our students to feel more connected. More than 60% of our goals are now complete. Through the strategic plan, we have also hired new faculty and staff, expanded student advising and introduced more support services, including those designed with safety and well-being in mind.

I invite you to find meaningful ways to connect with our campus community, especially as we continue our 125th anniversary celebrations this academic year. We need your perspectives and ideas to strengthen our Aztec family, the student experience and the ability of our faculty and staff to continue making meaningful contributions for years to come. For information on how to get involved, contact the Aztec Parents Association, a volunteer organization, at 619-594-1653 for more details.

Again, and on behalf of our global SDSU community, I thank you for helping us reimagine the future of SDSU as it shapes the path for the success of our students.

Sincerely,

Adela de la Torre, Ph.D.
San Diego State University President
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As a parent of a San Diego State University student, it’s safe to say that one of the first people you encountered on campus was a student in an SDSU red polo shirt who greeted you and your family with a warm smile and an engaging, informative tour.

Yes, you met an SDSU Ambassador.

The SDSU Ambassadors are the university’s official student representatives, tour guides and orientation leaders. They also work at a number of campus events, including Explore SDSU, New Student and Family Convocation, Welcome Week, Aztec Nights, Homecoming, Family Weekend, athletic events and Commencement — to name just a few. They also do extensive community service work with local elementary schools and not-for-profit organizations.

“I joined the SDSU Ambassador program because I wanted to have a meaningful and substantial impact on incoming first-year, transfer and graduate students at SDSU.”

— Zak Labus, 23-year-old graduate student

Francisco Velazquez, director of New Student and Parent Programs, which oversees the Ambassador program, said that staff looks for a diverse group of students who display strong leadership qualities, enthusiasm, professionalism, an interest in wanting to get involved and a passion for SDSU.

As one of the first official campus representatives to connect with new students and their families, the 80-100 SDSU Ambassadors (number depending on the year) play a vital role in facilitating that your student’s transition to university life is as smooth as possible — a role that Ambassadors said they cherish.

“I joined the SDSU Ambassador program because I wanted to have a meaningful and substantial impact on incoming first-year, transfer and graduate students at SDSU,” said Zak Labus, a 23-year-old graduate student in postsecondary educational leadership who recently completed his first full year as an Ambassador. “The 55-minute campus walking tours give tour participants the chance to fall in love with the SDSU campus and community much like I did as a newly admitted student. And summer New Student Orientation is an essential part of a student’s transition to SDSU.”

Sarah Williams, a fifth-year business management and theatre arts double major, has been an Ambassador for two years.

“I joined the Ambassador program because I wanted to share the deep love I have for our campus with others and hopefully make incoming students and families love it as much as I do,” said Williams. “I truly have had such a great experience at SDSU, and I love interacting and sharing those experiences with others.”

The Ambassadors program in recent years has introduced new tours to live up to the university’s commitment to advance equity and inclusion in everything it does. This year, the program launched Black Excellence Historical Tours, which dive deep into the achievements of the university’s Black students, alumni and others who played an influential role on campus, as well as tour the resources available to Black students.

Other tours, including ones tailored toward Latinx and Indigenous students, are in the works, Velazquez said.

continued page 9 »
**CAREER SERVICES**

Left: SDSU mechanical engineering students interning at local San Diego firms.

**INTERNSHIPS CULTIVATE EXPERIENCES THAT HELP STUDENTS BECOME CAREER-READY**

*Access to internship opportunities comes from a variety of sources.*

By Leslie L.J. Reilly

Nine out of 10 employers prefer hiring students with internship experience, and nearly 52% of interns are offered full-time jobs, according to research by the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

Internships offer experiential learning during which students can apply theories and knowledge from the classroom to real-life professional work scenarios while earning valuable work experience to add to a resume. Internships also give students a chance to make important connections with professionals in a chosen field as they explore their career paths.

In the LGBTQ+ studies program, students discover internships through a required course, but in other SDSU academic departments, it is the advisers, professors, career counselors or the team at the SDSU Career Services center who can assist in connecting students to these important opportunities.

“We find that students succeed when placed in appropriate businesses,” said Claudia Martinez, experiential learning specialist in Career Services. “Students can access SDSU Handshake to seek thousands of job and internship postings.”

SDSU Handshake is the recruiting platform that makes it easy for students to access internship opportunities, upload resumes, make interview appointments, and connect with career counselors.

Career Services also offers skills assessment. Popular with students is the Strong Interest Inventory, which surveys student characteristics and how they align with specific industries and jobs.

“When it comes to finding their paths, I think it is important that students look at internships as a way to also explore an industry – not only from a lens of getting one’s foot in the door, but also acknowledging that this experience may demonstrate that the industry of interest may not be a good fit after all, and that’s just as important of an experience,” Martinez said.

Career Services also offers career advising focused on internship search strategies, the Aztec Mentor Program to connect students with mentors in their fields of interest, and the career readiness certificate program.

In the LGBTQ+ studies program advanced graduate certificate program, students are required to take the LGBTQ-598 internship course. Oftentimes internships lead to permanent positions, as in the case of Dianna Ratsamy, a second-year master’s sociology student. They completed the advanced graduate certificate and interned last summer at Breaking Down Barriers, an outreach and education program of Jewish Family Services of San Diego. Ratsamy was offered a position as a mental health outreach and education specialist upon completion of the internship.

“As an LGBTQ-598 intern at Breaking Down Barriers (BDB), I worked mainly with the LGBTQ+ outreach coordinator and community partners to develop educational presentations on the mental health of LGBTQ+ people,” Ratsamy said.

“Through this internship, I learned the importance of practicing ‘making space and taking space’ while working with community partners and the BDB team,” Ratsamy said. “My current position aligns with both my personal and work values of collaborative leadership, empathy, social justice, relationship-building, mental health advocacy, and accessibility.”

For more information and resources, visit SDSU Career Services Internship Central at [sacd.sdsu.edu/career/internship-central](sacd.sdsu.edu/career/internship-central)

Students learn more about the recruiting platform Handshake at [sacd.sdsu.edu/career/handshake](sacd.sdsu.edu/career/handshake)

For LGBTQIA+ internships, visit: [lgbt.sdsu.edu/internships](lgbt.sdsu.edu/internships) or Career Services/LGBTQIA+ [sacd.sdsu.edu/career/lgbtq-students](sacd.sdsu.edu/career/lgbtq-students)
SDSU WELCOMES RECORD-SETTING CLASSES OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Fall saw the largest first-year class in SDSU’s history with record-breaking enrollment numbers, high GPAs and new opportunities. Transfer students also reached a near-record high of 4,000 students with two-thirds from local community colleges.

By Lainie McCorkle

Following a record number of applications, San Diego State University welcomed its largest class of first-year students to the campus community this fall.

SDSU received nearly 77,000 first-time student applications, the highest number ever. This number, combined with additional funding from the California State University system, made it possible for SDSU to admit and enroll the largest class of first-time students in university history – at nearly 6,500 students. These students are from around the region, country and world and represent 45 different states and 46 countries.

Brighton Martsoif-Tan, a first-year student from Vermont, always knew they wanted to attend a school in California, and SDSU felt right.

“I was immediately captivated by the new urban environment, a diverse student population, the many academic opportunities, great food and, of course, the beach and year-round warm weather that I would have access to at SDSU,” said Martsoif-Tan.

The largest class of first-year students also brings with it high-grade point averages, with the average GPA at about 3.9. Of these high-achieving students, nearly 2,000 are from the local service area, an increase of nearly 25% from last fall.

Ashleigh Quevedo, a born and raised San Diegan and first-time student majoring in nursing, says she wanted to stay close to home and family and liked what SDSU had to offer.

“I love the social life at SDSU; there are lots of things going on, and the campus is very diverse,” Quevedo said. “I am a first-generation college student in my family, and it makes me so proud that I am able to do something my immigrant parents didn’t have the opportunity to do. I am so excited to be able to grow and learn more about myself in a new setting with people with similar and different backgrounds.”

Given the challenges they faced over the last two years, and the record applicant pool from which they were chosen, they certainly earned their admission,” said Stefan Hyman, associate vice president for Enrollment Management. “We’re eager to support them in the next step of their journeys.”

SDSU is also welcoming one of the largest transfer classes in its history with 4,000 students, and two-thirds of them are from the local service area. It’s an increase that can be attributed to a CSU effort to strengthen the community college pipeline to its campuses and SDSU’s effort to expand access.

Alexandria Ramseier was born in Okinawa, Japan, to a military family. For her, California and San Diego always felt like home because of the military-connected community and resources. She spent two years at Mira Costa College before transferring to SDSU.

Ramseier feels a key to succeeding in a new environment is finding a community, and before her time even began on campus, she joined the Transfer Student Outreach Alliance.

“I am excited to say that I am serving with TSOA on their officer board. Through meeting other transfers, I have learned there is a certain unawareness surrounding them, whether that involves their social lives or opportunities available at SDSU. I believe the transfer community needs a brighter beacon, and I believe the incoming student officers and I are going to do our best to shine it.”

NEW OPPORTUNITIES THIS FALL AT SDSU IMPERIAL VALLEY

The efforts to expand access extends to the SDSU Imperial Valley campus as well. It welcomed its first class of students participating in the Archway Program, which provides Imperial Valley students access to more academic programs on the San Diego campus, and the first class of students enrolled in the new nursing major.
The Aztec Parents Fund ensures that your student continues to receive the well-rounded, quality education for which our university is recognized.

This year the Aztec Parents Advisory Board approved funding to four programs that impact SDSU students.

- The Young Men of Color Alliance (YMoCA)
- Career Readiness Certificate
- Launch Into Leadership Program
- Pregnant and Parenting Student Initiative

The Aztec Parents Fund helps by creating and enhancing programs and services that benefit students. The collective philanthropic efforts of Aztec parents help fill the gap between state support and the funding needed to sustain and build on SDSU’s nationally recognized excellence.

Empowering Young Men of Color

The Young Men of Color Alliance is a collaborative program with the Men of Color Alliance Employee Resource Group, Center for Intercultural Relations, Counseling and Psychological Services, and the Office of Educational Opportunity Programs, Outreach and Success. This program is open to all incoming first-year and transfer students who identify as men of color or nonbinary persons of color. Through participation in the program, students will receive access to resources such as peer mentors and professional development opportunities.

Preparing Students for the Ever-Changing Workforce

With the support of the Aztec Parents Fund, the Career Services Readiness Certificate program will be able to provide a select number of students with a stipend while they work unpaid internships. The assistance of the fund will help lessen the financial burden of SDSU students wanting to grow professionally in their respective fields.

Building the Leaders of Tomorrow

The Launch Into Leadership Program is a yearlong, immersive leadership experience for first-year students looking to meet fellow emerging student leaders on campus. The program consists of building a cohort of 30 students who will give back to the SDSU and San Diego communities throughout their time in the program. They will be able to apply for a leadership scholarship, which is available via the Aztec Scholarship Portal and is only available to students in this program. Scholarships range from $1,500 - $2,000.

“This program helps to make global leaders of tomorrow. After completing the program, these students will be fully immersed in...
STATECOMMTS $80 MILLION FOR STEM IN IMPERIAL VALLEY

By SDSU News Team

San Diego State University Imperial Valley, its Brawley campus and the community are poised for a dramatic expansion in STEM education and research, tying into regional plans for major economic development as California’s “Lithium Valley.”

The state budget provides $80 million for a STEM facility on SDSU Imperial Valley’s Brawley campus: construction of a 65,000-square-foot facility at Brawley to house science, technology, chemistry, engineering and mathematics programming.

Plans call for 25,000 square feet for labs and core facilities with major instruments — to include space to collaborate with both public and private partners — 20,000 square feet of STEM-focused classroom and teaching laboratory space; and additional office space.

For more information or to contribute to the Aztec Parents Fund, contact Aztec Parent Programs at 619-594-1653 or visit sdsu.edu/aztecparents.

MESOAMERICAN STUDIES CENTER OPENED

By Tobin Vaughn

More than two dozen San Diego State University educators and administrators, accompanied by state lawmakers, traveled to Oaxaca, Mexico for the grand opening of the university’s new Mesoamerican studies center. The ribbon-cutting was followed by a two-day conference discussing binational collaboration in research.

SDSU President Adela de la Torre led the SDSU contingent, which was joined by a similar group of dignitaries representing government and education institutions in Mexico. De la Torre is familiar with the region, having lived and worked in Oaxaca in some capacity for more than 15 years.

Conferences, along with the establishment of the SDSU Center for Mesoamerican Studies, the president said, will encourage transborder diplomacy, cross-disciplinary relationships and binational cooperation.

For more information or to contribute to the Aztec Parents Fund, contact Aztec Parent Programs at 619-594-1653 or visit sdsu.edu/aztecparents.
When Rick and Tess Garcia became Aztec Parents, they felt it was a bittersweet moment of having to witness their son Elijah take the next step in his academic career. “I'll never forget the day we moved him into his residence hall room at Maya before school started,” Tess said. “We were excited that our son was starting the next chapter of his life, but at the same time a little sad that he was that much closer to becoming a grown-up.”

Rick and Tess, who were the parent co-chairs for SDSU’s Family Weekend for 2022, have four sons. Rick graduated from San Diego State University with a bachelor’s degree in business administration, specializing in information decision systems. Tess graduated from University of California, San Diego and majored in political science and international relations. Both of them continued their education and received their MBAs. But when it came time for their sons to choose a college, the Garcias felt it was vital for them to make their own decisions.

Elijah chose to major in music education at SDSU, while another son is studying nursing elsewhere and another brother is pursuing mechanical engineering. Their youngest is in middle school.

“Elijah was considering attending universities in Texas and Arizona. We had already accepted that he would attend a college far from our home. When the letter came in from SDSU, he immediately said he was choosing SDSU. For me, it was like my wish had been granted,” said Rick.

Elijah attended Del Norte High School, where he studied music under Jennifer Kitelinger. While in high school, he had many opportunities to watch performances of the Marching Aztecs and Wind Bands from SDSU. During that time, he participated in several music clinics at SDSU. He attended the San Diego Summer Music Institute, where he was instructed by Shannon Kitelinger, director of Bands at SDSU (married to Jennifer Kitelinger). Because of his memorable experiences at SDSU, Elijah felt a strong connection to the university.

“After high school, I didn’t know what I wanted to do with the next part of my life,” he said, “and spent a few years at local community colleges. It wasn’t until coming to a few events at SDSU that I decided this was where I wanted to be. My favorite part of first coming to campus was that I felt a sense of accomplishment just to be admitted to SDSU.”

The Garcias decided to become involved in the Aztec Parents Association and were eventually invited to become board members of the Aztec Parents Advisory Board in February of 2022.

“We were lucky to be invited to a football game by Jen Stanley, senior director of Development and Luke Wood, vice president for Student Affairs and Campus Diversity. During the game, we were introduced to several other parents that were already part of the Aztec Parents Advisory Board,” said Rick. “Knowing that this was an opportunity to be more connected to our son, we didn’t hesitate when we were asked to join the Aztec Parents Advisory Board.”

The Garcias believe that being involved in the Aztec Parents Association and the Aztec Parents Advisory Board allows them to stay more in the loop of the current events and news at SDSU. “During events, we had the pleasure of meeting with many influential SDSU leaders, including President Adela de la Torre. It is through our involvement at SDSU that we’re able to lend our voice to issues at SDSU,” said Tess. As Aztec Parents...
Advisory Board members, they have been able to continue those important discussions and provide input to help fund programs supported by the Aztec Parents Fund.

Rick and Tess were chosen to be the parent representatives and spoke at New Student and Family Convocation.

“It is truly an honor to be chosen as parent representatives for Convocation as we realize the significance of this day,” said Rick.

When asked what their favorite part of their son attending San Diego State University was, Tess said, “We would be lying if we didn’t say our favorite part about Elijah attending SDSU is that he’s so close, that anytime he wants to come home we have his room ready for him.”

“I think most importantly, we want to make sure that all of our families feel welcome at SDSU regardless of their background,” he said. “We want to ensure that our new students feel like SDSU can be their new home, and this tour is a first step toward us being inclusive to everyone and welcoming everyone to our campus.”

Michael Rumfola, who has guided the tour during its first year, said that he’s seen the impact it has had on prospective Black students, as well as on himself.

“My favorite part about the tour is learning and speaking on the significance of Black culture at SDSU and San Diego,” said Rumfola, a 21-year-old fourth-year student double majoring in business marketing and sustainability. “I feel more connected to my culture and university when engaging tour participants in a civil rights-related discussion.”

Imparting these facts and knowledge to prospective students takes a lot of work behind the scenes. Because an Ambassador can lead a tour for many different majors or student groups, they have to learn about all of the various majors and disciplines at SDSU — no easy task, said Ximena Lopez Rivera, a third-year English major who has been an Ambassador for a year.

“I knew the position was very demanding, but learning a tour script about every single program and all the resources that the university offers and being able to understand each one is something that I wouldn’t have done if it wasn’t for the position,” said Lopez Rivera, 19. “It’s a lot of information, but it is all very rewarding and worth the time — including some all-nighters — in order to make an impact on someone, even if it is only one person.”

The Ambassadors’ training, which includes meeting staff and faculty from different departments and all seven SDSU colleges, is rewarding beyond conducting the tours, said Madeleine Young, a 20-year-old who is in her third year as a health communication major.

“I didn’t know that we would learn about so many useful resources the university has to offer in such detail and depth,” Young said. “I feel very confident in my knowledge of almost every single department on campus, and it makes me look forward to answering questions from students and families.

Beyond the training, Ambassadors said that one of the best features of the program is the camaraderie they develop with their peers.

“My favorite part of the SDSU Ambassadors is having the opportunity to interact with a diverse group of students and connect with students from all seven colleges on campus,” said Xavier Martin, a third-year psychology major with an emphasis in neuroscience and an Ambassador for a year. “This organization has allowed me to meet students who I wouldn’t typically interact with and to create connections outside of my college. I love the sense of community that is created among the SDSU Ambassadors and look forward to seeing familiar faces when I walk on campus.”

Velazquez, who himself was an Ambassador 16 years ago, said that hearing students praise the program is gratifying.

“As an alumnus of the program, coming full circle to see how it has evolved over the past 16 years is great,” Velazquez said. “We know that it has an impact on our prospective students, but to hear the impact it is having on our current student leaders is very rewarding.”
By Aaron Burgin

By the time this edition of News for Aztec Parents reaches your mailbox, tens of thousands of football fans will have experienced San Diego State University’s newest addition: Snapdragon Stadium.

The university’s $310 million, 35,000-seat ode to Aztec football and the San Diego community was unveiled Sept. 3, and officials involved with its construction and creation are excited about the impact it will have on the SDSU community and the San Diego region at large.

“It’s a game changer,” said Adam Millar, the stadium’s general manager. Millar (’87, business) works for Oak View Group, the venue management company hired by SDSU to operate Snapdragon Stadium. “This stadium, in my opinion, is such a gem for all of San Diego.”

By the NUMBERS

35,000 SEATING CAPACITY • 7 SDSU FOOTBALL HOME GAMES IN 2022-23

Snapdragonstadium.com

UNIQUELY SAN DIEGO

From its stunning architecture to its uniquely local food and beverage program and its equally unique spaces within the stadium, Snapdragon proudly embraces its San Diego roots.

This, Millar said, was by design, part of SDSU Director of Intercollegiate Athletics John David Wicker’s vision for the stadium, which is the cornerstone of the broader SDSU Mission Valley Project.

That project, built on the grounds of the former Qualcomm Stadium, includes 80 acres of parks and open space, a 1.6-million-square-foot innovation district, housing, a hotel and the 35,000-seat stadium.

“JD’s vision was that he wanted it to be 60 percent stadium, 40 percent uniquely San Diego, and it’s been all of our jobs to facilitate that vision,” Millar said. “I feel that it has been carried through by everyone, from the architect, Gensler, to Clark Construction, to SDSU Athletics, us at the Oak View Group and the SDSU community.”

One of the most visibly San Diego elements of the new stadium is a standing-room-only structure, the Sycuan Piers, in the southwest end designed to resemble San Diego’s numerous ocean piers. Another is the East Club, an area of the stadium with multicolored chairs, eclectic mosaics and plants overhanging from wooden structures laced with bistro lights, which gives the seating area a decidedly “North Park” vibe.

Another element is the food. The eight food vendors selected — Batch & Box, Best Pizza and Brew, Cali BBQ, The Crack Shack, Everbowl, Gaglione Brothers, Hodad’s and...
The Taco Stand — are favorites throughout the region.

“I think we’ve done a really good job of finding local restaurants that people hold near and dear in San Diego,” said Derek Grice, the executive associate athletic director for Mission Valley Development. “We tried to be as authentic to San Diego and Southern California as possible, and I am proud of the food program we’ve curated.”

Grice also pointed to the art that will be featured throughout the venue as giving the stadium more San Diego flourishes. Of the four major murals, three are done by local artists, and the fourth was done by the School of Art + Design. Several other pieces of art throughout the stadium were done by SDSU art students and SDSU alumni. Also, there were “story moments” throughout the building that tell the story of the Aztec football program.

“San Diego is a community built upon unique neighborhoods, and the stadium embodies that,” Grice said.

GREEN ON THE MIND

Beyond its San Diego-centric design, Snapdragon was also built with an eye on the environment.

The stadium was built to LEED Gold Certification standards. Gold is the second highest certification behind platinum.

From the demolition — during which 90 percent of the debris from the old stadium was diverted from landfills, including 200,000 tons of crushed concrete that was used as fill for the new site — to the construction with the contractor using a brand of low-carbon concrete and other sustainable mixes, and its energy efficiency, water conservation and low-impact development standards, officials said Snapdragon is one of the most green stadium projects built on the West Coast.

Solar shade canopies, 3,000 feet worth, are being installed over the tailgate parking lot, soaking up the natural year-round sun at the site, which will help the stadium be a net zero total energy increase as compared to Qualcomm, according to the project’s environmental impact report.

continued on page 23
When Daniel and Joan Roman got a call from their daughter, Lori, in the fall of 1997, the reason why came as a surprise.

Lori, then a fourth-year student, was involved with a program that was just getting formally started at San Diego State University, the Aztec Parents Association, and the group created to oversee it, the Aztec Parents Advisory Board.

After years of watching their daughter’s educational journey from afar, the Romans were thrilled by the invitation to join the association.

“It made us feel like we were a part of our daughter’s new life,” the elder Roman, Daniel, said. “We joined, and it was one of the best decisions we ever made.”

In an era when many universities were pushing “helicopter parents” away, SDSU was one of the first universities to clear the landing pad for them and treat them as partners in their student’s education.

Twenty-five years later, the Aztec Parents Association, the Aztec Parents Advisory Board and the Aztec Parents Fund — the philanthropic arm created to increase parental altruism — have become critical to fostering student success on campus.

On the 25th anniversary, parents and other stakeholders involved with the creation of the association and its companion board reflected on how they have shaped the campus since its official establishment in 1997.

“Because of the decision to formalize the association and create the board, parents became partners and helped to build SDSU into what it is today,” said Kathy Druquer-Duff, who was the coordinator for Parent Programs, the predecessor of today’s New Student and Parent Programs, in 1997. She oversaw the fledgling association and advisory board in her role.

SDSU had long seen parents as an important voice in the educational process. The Aztec Parents Association was initially established in 1986 with just over 100 parent volunteers who helped engage parents during new student orientation — very different from the formal program established 11 years later.

In June of 1997, SDSU reviewed parent programming and developed a road-map for short- and long-term growth. The new mission statement centered around enhancing the academic success and personal growth of SDSU students through a partnership between parents and the university. The new Aztec Parents goals, under the direction of then-Student...
Affairs Vice President Dan Nowak, SDSU Student Resource Center director Terry Hanten and Drucquer-Duf, focused on providing parents with experiences that linked them to the SDSU community.

One of the first areas in which parents formally got involved was the university’s strategic plan process in 1997. Members of the advisory board were among the 250 campus stakeholders at the three-day strategic plan conference.

“It was a watershed moment,” Drucquer-Duf said. “Parents, they have an obvious connection to the university, and you can either invite them in or you can close the door. I was so proud of Dan and Terry, and we had a university president (Stephen Weber) that really got it. It was fabulous.”

When Drucquer-Duf moved on from her role with the parents program, the job was left to her replacement, Eric Rivera, to continue to refine and expand the mission and role of the parents’ organizations.

Rivera, who would go on to become the vice president for Student Affairs by the time he retired in 2019, echoed many of the sentiments Drucquer-Duf expressed about what at the time was seen as groundbreaking — and somewhat controversial — work with parents.

Parent board members volunteered at Explore SDSU. They spoke on panels at Parent Orientation, helping answer questions and allay concerns from new parents. Some served as the parent pinners at New Student and Family Convocation and as co-chairs for Family Weekend.

These included parents like Jill and Howard Singer, who joined the board in 2008 when their daughter, Jaclyn, enrolled at SDSU. The Singers were regulars at Parent Orientation, giving new parents tips on how to ease into the transition from parent to supporter during their student’s college years.

Jill even traveled to cities across the country with school officials to meet future SDSU students and their parents.

And parents “shared their treasures,” a phrase echoed by Rivera, Drucquer-Duf and others, as part of the Aztec Parents Fund. The fund has supported hundreds of programs on campus with millions of dollars in contributions.

The Aztec Parents Advisory Board provided crucial feedback in 1998, suggesting that the fees for Parent Orientation and the Aztec Parents Association be combined into one. This made it seamless to join. In 1997, there were fewer than 1,000 households in the Aztec Parents Association. By the mid-2000s, there were more than 11,000 household members, and today there are close to 20,000. This means more direct grant money to student success programs, more parent volunteers and the ability to reach more parents with information.

Among the programs that benefited from the parent grants was eCheckUp To Go, a personalized, online drug and alcohol intervention program that provides students with feedback on their alcohol or cannabis consumption, based on the information they provide, which studies have shown can be a powerful change agent for students.

A $20,000 Aztec Parents Fund grant helped with the development of the cannabis intervention program after continued on page 18
A Dream Achieved: SHAWKI MOORE’S PATH TO ASSOCIATED STUDENTS PRESIDENT

COVID-19 threw the communication major off his planned path into student leadership. A willingness to shift gears — and caring peer mentors — helped him reach his goal.

HEN ASSOCIATED STUDENTS PRESIDENT Shawki Moore looks at the path to what he calls “the pinnacle of my college career” at San Diego State University, the fall of his sophomore year — upended by COVID-19 and other setbacks in his plans for a leadership role — emerges as a crossroads.

"To see [Onwuka] then be elected president gave me the inspiration that a Black man, like myself, could become president at a university where we only represent 4 percent of the population."

—Shawki Moore

"A lot of doors just closed in my face," said Moore, a communication major. “Plus I was back home. It was very defeating — for like one to two weeks."

Moore found inspiration from previous A.S. officers who helped him find alternative, but equally gratifying, routes to leadership and community service. The Afrikan Student Union and the Student African American Brotherhood welcomed his participation. He became a charter board member for the SDSU chapter of the NAACP and began to mentor Henrietta Goodwin Scholars students at the Black Resource Center.

Particularly influential in Moore’s road to student leadership was former A.S. President Christian Onwuka, whose address at a New Student and Family Convocation the summer before Moore’s first year at SDSU “planted the seed” for Moore to think of becoming the student body president himself.

“I think it’s super surreal to be able to accomplish something of this magnitude in my college career,” Moore said.

At Rodriguez High School in Fairfield, California, Moore was more interested in the football team, on which he played safety, than campus leadership. It wasn’t until he visited SDSU, as an admitted student, on Rambee Weekend in the spring of 2019, that he even considered it a possibility.

It was during that weekend he met Onwuka, then the A.S. vice president of Financial Affairs. Onwuka mentioned to Moore that he was going to run for president that semester.

“He was a big deciding factor on why I chose to come to SDSU,” Moore said. “To see him then be elected president gave me the inspiration that a Black man, like myself, could become president at a university where we only represent 4 percent of the population.”

Moore’s election also validated advice he received in a conversation with Maxwell Johnson, then a member of the A.S. executive team.

It was late in the spring of his first year. Moore was back home in Northern California, waiting out the COVID lockdown. He had lost an election to become a student diversity commissioner and was waitlisted as a residence hall adviser. His ambitious plan to win election to the A.S. leadership team as a sophomore was going nowhere.

Johnson mentored Moore as part of the freshman year Leadership Experience program.

“He said, ‘Listen, once one door closes, another one opens;’” Moore said. “And he was right.”

So Moore got involved in other student groups and remained active in his fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi. These positions, Moore continued next page »
said, allowed him to develop his leadership skills in a way he never expected.

“| I had to find another route, an unorthodox way to bolster my leadership, continue to grow within my college experience and be able to give back to my community,” Moore said. “It turned out to be more rewarding because I was in my community doing the work and really helping students that were going through a hard time.” |

His dream, it turned out, was simply deferred to his junior year.

Johnson, the former mentor who graduated from SDSU in 2020, said hearing Moore point to their conversation as a positive turning point is gratifying.

“Having Shawki in the leadership program, he had that natural charisma and true authentic passion for helping people and uplifting his community,” Johnson said. “So when he was faced with that obstacle and that disappointment, I knew I couldn’t let him give up on himself, and I knew the importance of when you’re at your lowest point, that is when you have to dig deepest and it’s so vital to have people who believe in you, too.”

Another turning point occurred before Moore started his campaign, when his father died. It rocked him to the point where he considered suspending his campaign.

“I lost my father, and it shook my world,” Moore said in his speech to students and parents at this year’s New Student and Family Convocation. “At first, I didn’t have the motivation to continue. I knew my dream was being tested, and I didn’t know if it was a test I could pass. My father knew I wanted the presidency, and he faced with that obstacle and that disappointment, I knew I couldn’t let him give up on himself, and I knew the importance of when you’re at your lowest point, that is when you have to dig deepest and it’s so vital to have people who believe in you, too.”

Moore, who said he is considering pursuing a career in communications or sportscasting after graduation, said he also looks forward to his first full “college experience” in his final year.

“My first year we only had one semester, sophomore year we were off campus, and this year, we just started to get back to normal, with a few restrictions. I’m just looking to find a level of normalcy and having a fun year where I’m able to provide a lot to all of the things I am involved in.”

ZIP LAUNCHPAD DEVELOPS REAL-WORLD STARTUP SKILLS

Would-be entrepreneurs are in the right place at SDSU, where entrepreneurship programs and support consistently rank among the top in the nation.

San Diego State University’s startup incubator, Zahn Innovation Platform (ZIP) Launchpad, offers guidance, tools and support to fledgling business ventures.

With the assistance of ZIP Launchpad, SDSU management majors Carlin Pace and Setareh Sterling teamed up to develop C.A.S.H. — Competitive Athlete Sponsorship Hub — a digital platform that matches businesses with student-athletes to endorse their products via social media.

Pace and Sterling believe the app could benefit both small businesses with limited marketing budgets and student-athletes, whose busy schedules make it hard to fit in a part-time job.

They applied to the ZIP Launchpad to help develop their idea and work toward launching their company. ZIP Launchpad has helped over 355 teams (over 700 students) explore their startup ideas.

“The participants begin by identifying a significant problem that they are passionate about solving,” said Cathy Pucher, ZIP Launchpad’s executive director. “Once accepted to the program, they work in a supportive and collaborative environment, going step by step from problem to solution to startup.”

The business incubator is open to all SDSU students, faculty and staff. With support from donors and SDSU, participants have access to 24/7 workspace, experienced mentors, legal advisors and domain experts who walk them through the startup process. There are business workshops and events, and up to $5,000 is available to fund an idea’s validation.

The H.G. Fenton Company Idea Lab is located next door to ZIP Launchpad’s headquarters on the first floor of the Engineering and Interdisciplinary Sciences (EIS) building. Here, participants design logos and websites for their businesses and create product mockups. They can outsource that work to design and engineering interns who help make participants’ visions reality and themselves gain valuable experience.

ZIP Launchpad teams have created products ranging from skateboard lights to sustainable cookies and a drinking water safety app. Thirty-one teams have successfully launched themselves into the business world.

Pace and Sterling hope to get their C.A.S.H. app up and running in the not-too-distant future.

“Without ZIP, I don’t think we would have gotten as far as we’ve gotten,” said Sterling. “It’s going to have a very lasting, meaningful impact on our lives.”

Go to ziplaunchpad.sdsu.edu for more information on the ZIP Launchpad and the application process. Applications for the spring 2023 semester will be accepted beginning Dec. 1, 2022, through Feb. 5, 2023.
WELCOME TO THE STUDENT FINANCIAL CENTER

THE STUDENT FINANCIAL CENTER is SDSU’s one-stop shop where all students and parents can ask their financial aid, scholarships and student account questions by speaking directly with a counselor. More than 60% of SDSU’s 33,000 students are on financial aid. During the academic year, when you and your student may not be physically in the same location, the Student Financial Center can meet with you virtually to discuss your financial inquiries. We look forward to assisting you!

THE STUDENT FINANCIAL CENTER ASSISTS WITH:

- Financial aid and scholarship inquiries
- Document submission
- Billing inquiries
- Loan activation
- Payment plans
- Refunds

For live assistance with student accounts or financial aid and scholarships, visit the Student Financial Center Monday - Friday, during office hours (Zoom meeting ID 87293575613). Connect to the Student Financial Center at sacd.sdsu.edu/sfc.

PAYMENTS/BILLING/DISBURSEMENTS

- After registration: Tuition and fee charges will populate on my.SDSU within one to two business days.
- Disbursements: If your student qualifies for financial aid, financial aid disbursements begin every semester approximately one week prior to the start of the semester.
- Payment plan enrollment: Complete payment plan enrollment using my.SDSU (Financial Account tile).
- Housing installment due dates: Housing License Agreement rates are divided into eight installments and are due on 8/20, 9/20, 10/20, 11/20, 1/20, 2/20, 3/20, 4/20.

my.SDSU

- View financial aid eligibility
- Activate loans
- Pay basic tuition and fees
- Sign up for a payment plan
- Submit required documents
- Read important updates
- Sign up for direct deposit
- And more …
LOAN ACTIVATION
Activate loans now (if needed) to pay university expenses.

STUDENT LOANS
- **Subsidized**: Need-based loan, interest-free while the student is enrolled in six or more units. Not all students qualify for this loan.
- **Unsubsidized**: No financial need required, so most students qualify. A low interest rate is assessed from the time funds are disbursed.
- Repayment for both loan types begins six months after graduation.

Students need to log into my.SDSU to accept loans.

PARENT PLUS LOAN
- No financial need required.
- A credit check is required.
- Loan repayment begins in the same academic year the loan is taken.
- Interest rate is higher than the student loans.
- Visit studentaid.gov to complete the loan activation process and to view the loan interest rate!

Be sure your student completes all 3 steps to activating a loan.
1. Accept the loan on the my.SDSU portal
2. Complete the Master Promissory Note at studentaid.gov
3. Complete the required loan counseling at studentaid.gov

Be sure you complete all 3 steps to activating a loan.
1. Request the Parent PLUS loan through studentaid.gov
2. Complete the Parent PLUS Master Promissory Note at studentaid.gov
3. Complete the required credit counseling, if necessary, at studentaid.gov

PARENT ACCESS
Due to SDSU’s implementation of my.SDSU, the CSU-standard system, parent access is impacted. The system as implemented does not support parent access to student information, such as financial aid and detailed student billing. Parents need to work closely with their students to view the financial aid package and to see a line item of bills and due dates. Parents can currently only see the total amount due. Also, students need to set up an alternate payer account, which will allow their parents or guardian to pay. In the future, we plan on adding parent functionality and accessibility.

WEBINAR SERIES
The Student Financial Center holds webinars throughout the year. For dates, times and meeting ID’s visit the Student Financial Center website at sacd.sdsu.edu/sfc

FAFSA REMINDER
Beginning October: File the 2023-24 FAFSA

SDSU AZTEC SCHOLARSHIPS
- Scholarship award notifications are being sent daily, with over 1,200 scholarships valued at close to $4 million already awarded for the 2022-23 academic year.
- If selected for a scholarship, an email is sent to students’ SDSU email address directing them to accept the scholarship offer and complete their thank-you note within 14 calendar days of the official award notification.
- Regret emails were scheduled to be sent in late October.
- For more information visit sdsu.edu/scholarships

SFC HOURS
Summer months are the busiest for the Student Financial Center. During the summer months the Student Financial Center assisted over 23,000 students and parents. Wait times will steadily decrease during the academic year.

sacd.sdsu.edu/sfc
AZTEC PARENTS FROM PAGE 13

years of success with its sister program for alcohol use.

Jennifer Rikard, the director of Counseling & Psychological Services, said the parent contribution was a game changer. “What it helped us do was make our work in the counseling center, which was one by one, scalable,” Rikard said. “Now, we can impact 10,000 students this fall. We are incredibly grateful to the Aztec Parents Association for supporting the development of this important intervention for our students and students around the world.”

Randy Timm, SDSU’s current Dean of Students, said that parent philanthropy also led to efforts to help students stay — and thrive — on campus, including the establishment of Aztec Nights, the Glazer Center for Leadership and Service and Casa Azteca, which is now the Center for Commuter Life.

“I don’t think many of us could imagine SDSU without any of these centers existing today or students not having fun, late-night, substance-free events, such as Aztec Nights, to welcome them to the SDSU community,” Timm said. “We are thankful and appreciative of our strong partnership with parents and families, which has led to a lasting impact on generations to come of SDSU students through these initiatives and many others.”

Parents’ grants have been used to promote public safety and to bolster programs in Student Health Services and leadership initiatives.

The fund also helped to champion SDSU’s first-generation students and students with financial need, such as Guardian Scholars, which supports students who identify as current or former foster youth or wards of the court through their time at the university.

Darren Greenhalgh and his wife, Teresa, were two who spearheaded fundraising efforts for the Guardian Scholars’ Dress to Success program.

The Greenhalghs, a legacy family (Darren got his bachelor’s degree from SDSU in 1986 and his MBA in 2005), joined the Aztec Parents Advisory Board in 2011, when their children, Brittany and Kyle, attended the university. Their children graduated in 2013 and 2016, respectively.

The Guardian Scholars program gave a presentation to the board, which moved Greenhalgh to host a small fundraiser with 10 friends at a local burger joint. By the third year, he was hosting the fundraiser at the Coronado Yacht Club with over 50 people in attendance.

“It’s an inspiring program, and it made me feel good to be a part of it,” Darren said.

Several years after he left the board, Daniel Roman also got involved with raising funds for Guardian Scholars at the behest of several current board members.

“I didn’t know much about the foster care system,” Roman said. “I didn’t understand when you became 18 that was the end of the line. But now, with the Guardian Scholars program, we’ve seen the success rate for students at the university skyrocket, and I feel like the parents association has played a role in that.”

The Singers, too, donated printers and laptops to Guardian Scholars students and also raised funds for the Dress for Success program.

“We have received heartwarming letters from Guardian Scholars participants, who tell us that the laptops and printers we gave to them will allow them to compete at the highest level in their college courses,” Jill Singer said. “Their words of appreciation are as meaningful to us as our gifts are to these hardworking students.”

As SDSU’s relationships with its parents strengthened, public universities across the country took heed and created similar programs for their parents.

“What we have now far exceeded our vision of what the program would be and the impact it would have on the university,” Rivera said. “We know from research that students whose parents are members of the Aztec Parents Association are more likely to have higher grade point averages than other students. SDSU’s partnership with parents has shown over the years to be vital for our students’ success.”

Michelle Guerra served alongside Rivera in several roles, culminating with director of New Student and Parent Programs from 2014 until her departure from the university in 2019. An area where she believes the university blazed a trail was in the creation of the Parent Hotline, which gave parents a conduit to the university so they could talk to a parent liaison and relay concerns that they had or that their students had — anything from “my student dropped their cell phone down an elevator shaft” (true story, Guerra said) to concerns about class schedules, campus safety and other topics.

As the 2020s dawned, NSPP rolled out a parent and family Facebook page — facebook.com/groups/SDSUParentsandFamily — and the monthly Parent and Family Newsletter to join News for Aztec Parents magazine and other communications with parents. A podcast was launched in the fall of this year.

Francisco Velazquez, who currently serves as NSPP director, said the advent of the Facebook page, podcast and the newsletter were a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and an “evolution of the parent hotline.”

continued next page »
“Parents were craving information and wanting to be informed,” Velazquez said. “These efforts grew out of the necessity to broaden our communication channels with families and parents during the pandemic, and we wanted to meet and exceed their expectations.”

Throughout the pandemic, the Parents Advisory Board remained engaged by way of Zoom meetings, and parents continued to support the Aztec Parents Fund and other parents’ programs.

“It could have been the opposite,” Velazquez said. “They could have become less engaged because, well, their student isn’t on campus so why would they need to participate? Rather, they continued and bolstered their commitment to the university, which was great to see.”

Today, SDSU leaders are equally enthusiastic about the role of parents. “Parents continue to be central to the university’s plan of student success,” said J. Luke Wood, the vice president for Student Affairs and Campus Diversity.

“Your support ensures that every student can participate in experiential learning endeavors to challenge assumptions and push beyond boundaries while advancing our commitment to diversity,” Wood said. “With a myriad of opportunities to get involved, including volunteering, attending events and pledging support, SDSU’s strong culture of parent engagement enhances the student experience today while making a lasting impact for years to come. This enables all of our students to contribute to the dynamic vitality of SDSU and transform the world.”

Additionally, in line with the university’s strategic plan priority of “Equity and Inclusion in Everything We Do,” NSPP has increased its efforts to reach out to parents of first-generation college students and to Latinx parents with the creation of a Latinx and First Generation parent coordinator, Velazquez said.

“As a Hispanic Serving Institution with a large number of first-generation students, we want to make sure we are supporting our diverse student body and their families,” he said. “All of these efforts are at the very core of NSPP, the Parents Association and the Advisory Board’s mission the past 25 years.”

Who was one of the first parent liaisons? Lori Roman — now Lori Getz — who became the liaison back in 1997 under Drucquer-Duff and Hanten. Her work as liaison was what prompted her to make that phone call to her parents asking them to join the Aztec Parents Advisory Board.

“The only way for them to truly understand what I was going through as a student was to see it firsthand, so having my parents involved allowed them to have more empathy,” Getz said. “The Parents Association did that for me and my family, and I would strongly encourage families consider that for themselves.”

Roman echoed his daughter’s sentiments.

“I can tell you, when your child leaves, it’s really nice to be involved,” Roman said. “They are going away from home for the first time, you’re concerned and suddenly you’re a part of this organization — and suddenly they’re not so far away.”

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SDSU PROFESSORS WORK TO REDUCE GRADUATION EQUITY GAPS

By Sarah White

When you’re driving around an unfamiliar place, feeling a bit lost, confused and stressed about where you’re meant to go, you likely depend on a GPS for directions.

Now imagine that unfamiliar place is a college-level math class and you’re a student who has previously felt unwelcome or struggled in STEM subjects; where do you turn?

“In education, we often think that it’s the student’s job to be motivated,” said SDSU social psychologist Dustin Thoman. “But really, motivation is determined by the person as well as the context.”

Thoman and his colleague, fellow SDSU psychology professor Allison Vaughn, have been collaborating with Motivate Lab, an educational psychology research group, to train faculty and teaching assistants at five California State University campuses how to change the classroom environment to encourage students’ motivation and persistence in psychology, chemistry and biology courses.

“We drive home three key principles about motivation with the handy acronym GPS: maintaining a growth mindset, feeling like the course has purpose and relevance, and feeling a sense of belonging,” he said.

They can now expand this training to lower-division math courses — often prerequisites to upper-division STEM courses. It was one of five projects selected for the CSU-wide Creating Responsive, Equitable, Active Teaching and Engagement program, funded by the College Futures Foundation.

The SDSU team, along with their partners at Cal Poly Pomona and the Motivate Lab, will receive $175,000 in addition to a previous College Futures Foundation grant of $225,000 the psychology professors received for their earlier work in 2021.

The CREATE program financially supports efforts to meet the CSU Graduation Initiative 2025 goals of reducing gaps in graduation rates.
SDSU Named ‘Diversity Champion,’ Receives National Diversity Award

San Diego State University has been named a “Diversity Champion” for its commitment to diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community, academic programs and administration.

INSIGHT Into Diversity, a leading website and magazine in higher education, also selected SDSU for its HEED (Higher Education Excellence in Diversity) Award for a sixth time. SDSU was among 16 colleges and universities to receive the 2022 Diversity Champion designation.

SDSU was the only university in California to receive both the Champions and the HEED awards.

“SDSU is proud to be recognized for our success in creating a diverse and inclusive environment,” said J. Luke Wood, vice president for Student Affairs and Campus Diversity and chief diversity officer. “This is the result of a concerted effort that reaches every college, school and department and is embodied in our strategic plan, which specifically commits us to ‘equity and inclusion in everything we do,’ including research and community engagement.”

SDSU Ranks Among Nation’s Top Colleges

New annual college rankings place San Diego State University in the top 75 for public universities — No. 72 — as assessed by U.S. News & World Report and No. 63 in “Top Colleges” by Forbes.

In addition, U.S. News recognized the undergraduate international business program, offered through the Fowler College of Business and the College of Arts and Letters, as No. 13 nationally.

In the annual Campus Pride survey, SDSU drew a five-star rating and repeated as a “Best of the Best” for LGBTQ students — one of 40 colleges selected nationwide. It is the only California university, public or private, included in this year’s “Best of the Best.”

The score reflects such features as its major and minor in LGBTQ+ Studies, The Pride Center, a Pride Employee Resource Group, various awareness initiatives and the Lavender Graduation ceremony.

SDSU Researchers Net Record $164.5M in Grants

San Diego State University researchers secured $164.5 million in grant funding for the 2021-22 academic year, marking a record-breaking year for university research as faculty sought to improve human health, confront injustice and develop solutions to major societal issues like climate change.

With 17% growth over the previous year, SDSU’s upward trajectory in research-related funding affirms the university is making progress in its goal — outlined in its five-year strategic plan — of becoming a premier public research university.

“This is a groundbreaking year for research at SDSU,” said Hala Madanat, vice president for Research and Innovation. “This incredible research activity is a testament to our faculty and how committed they are to improving society through their work.”

Some 350 principal investigators received 761 awards from 323 funding agencies, and researchers were busy working to secure further support — submitting 1,237 proposals for research-related funding.

SDSU President Receives LEAD San Diego Visionary Award for Innovation, Economic Impact

LEAD San Diego – the nonpartisan, leadership development arm of the San Diego Regional Chamber – presented SDSU President Adela de la Torre with the 2022 LEAD San Diego Visionary Award for Innovation and Economic Opportunity for her role in championing SDSU Mission Valley.

The university’s plans for the 132-acre property include a 35,000-seat stadium; 80 acres of parks and open space, including a 34-acre river park for the San Diego community; and an Innovation District with up to 1.6 million square feet of campus, technology and commercial space.

During construction, SDSU Mission Valley is expected to create more than 20,000 new jobs and contribute an additional $4.6 billion per year to the local economy. Once completed, the ongoing impact to San Diego is estimated at $3 billion per year and 17,000 jobs.

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The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia selected SDSU to lead a $4.19 million World Bank-funded effort to transform early childhood education, which focuses on children from ages 2-5, including 5-year-old preschoolers. SDSU was chosen in a contract finalized as part of a competitive proposal process, which attracted multiple international institutions.

“For the last eight years, SDSU Georgia has been a beacon of hope and opportunity for many Georgian students and their families,” said SDSU President Adela de la Torre. “Our collaboration with the educational leaders in Georgia has provided SDSU a critical foundation to not only address this new focus on early childhood education, but also continue a sustainable partnership to strengthen our role in supporting the strategic goals of the Georgian nation.

Cristina Alfaro, SDSU’s associate vice president for International Affairs, said the collaboration with local stakeholders is critical to ensuring the creation of a system that works within the Georgian context.

San Diego State University will soon be able to offer independent Doctor of Public Health degrees, thanks to a bill signed into law by Gov. Gavin Newsom.

Newsom on Sept. 30 signed SB 684, authored by Sen. Ben Hueso, which allows California State University campuses to offer the DrPH programs.

The university will soon begin the formal process for program development, which will require institutional and CSU approvals, with the expectation that the program could be offered as early as the 2023-24 academic year.

The new law is a major victory for SDSU, which has pushed for independent doctorates that do not require other university partners.

“SDSU has long argued that independent doctorates are our future. This new legislation is a step towards that, and will allow us to meet a critical workforce need,” said SDSU President Adela de la Torre, who has for years led discussions about the need to expand independent doctorate options at SDSU as well as the CSU.

Hala Madanat, interim vice president for the Division of Research and Innovation and former director of the San Diego State University School of Public Health, has been named to the permanent vice president role.

Madanat is responsible for elevating university research across disciplines, along with the university’s creative activities. Under her leadership, the Division of Research and Innovation attracted a record-breaking $164.5 million in research grants in 2022.

At SDSU Imperial Valley, Guillermina Gina Núñez-Mchiri — an associate professor of anthropology and director at the University of Texas at El Paso — has been named the new dean. The Calexico High School graduate received her undergraduate degree in international business and her master’s in Latin American studies from San Diego State University and her doctorate in cultural anthropology from the University of California, Riverside.

And at KPBS, Deanna Mackey, an executive leader and journalist with more than 30 years of experience, has been appointed general manager. As general manager, and the first Latina to serve in the role, Mackey will oversee KPBS, which includes KPBS TV (four channels), Radio 89.5 and 97.7 and the organization’s digital platforms.

6 Students Earn Fulbright Grants

Six SDSU students were selected for this year’s Fulbright student program, which provides grants from the U.S. Department of State for international study/research and for work as English teaching assistants.

Karina Arzuyan, working on a master’s degree in ecology, will go to the south Caucasus region to research toxic algal blooms in Lake Sevan.

Anh-Thu Nguyen (’22, B.A., speech, language and hearing sciences) will be an English assistant in a South Korean elementary school.

Elise Ramirez (’22, B.A., speech, language and hearing sciences and Spanish) will be in Spain, planning to volunteer at programs and organizations that empower girls and women.

Kenia Rodriguez (’22, B.S., child and family development) will be an English assistant at a secondary school in South Korea.

Perla Echeverria (December 2022, B.A. social work and international security and conflict resolution), is going to a South Korean secondary school to teach English and become involved in the community.

An additional student received an award for a study and research project in Canada and the U.S. A total 100 students from SDSU have been chosen for the prestigious program since 2005-06.

SDSU, Chula Vista to Build Film, TV Studio

SDSU and Chula Vista are partnering on an $89 million, 168,000-square-foot Cinematic Arts Academic Center and Library project, which will be home to the university’s new, state-of-the-art Television, Film and New Media Studios.

The multiuse facility at 1775 Millenia Ave., in eastern Chula Vista, will be funded via $30 million in state funding and $59 million from the City of Chula Vista.

This SDSU studios will contain a 50,000-square-foot film and TV teaching facility with soundstages, editing and mixing suites, classrooms, meeting rooms and faculty space. It also will be available to Southwestern College and industry partners.

With a unique focus on independent filmmaking, the SDSU studios is designed to prepare students in all aspects of film and television production, including the business aspects. It will also provide students with opportunities to graduate with a film portfolio.

CSU Board Recognizes SDSU Student

Chamese Dempsey, a master’s student in social work, was honored with a Trustee Scholars Award for Outstanding Achievement from the CSU Board of Trustees. Her Stauffer Foundation Scholar award comes with $8,000 in financial aid for the next academic stage of her journey, which includes participation in a Tribal Pilot program to bring Native students into the profession.

Dempsey — a first-generation student whose Indigenous identity is with the Paiute, Yaqui and Ojibwe people — aims to tackle multiple mental health issues in Indigenous communities. Her goal is licensure as a clinical social worker in direct practice.

The award recognized the single mother of three for her outstanding academic work, her research, community involvement, extensive social work experience and perseverance. Tamara Strohauer, a lecturer and coordinator of the SERVE Indigenous Social Workers for Change Project, said Dempsey has committed herself to education and to being “an agent of change.”

SDSU Donor Support Now Strongest Ever

SDSU received $136 million in gift commitments over the past fiscal year, the most successful ever for philanthropic support for the university and an increase of roughly 2.1% over the previous year.

The new record marks the fourth consecutive year of philanthropic growth and reflects support from gifts of all types throughout the university. SDSU is above the national average for donor retention, focusing on showing donors what their gifts are accomplishing.

In the past year, areas generating the most support include athletics and the Fowler College of Business. Increased support for Student Affairs and Campus Diversity resulted from a couple of significant gifts, including a donation from a current parent who funded a training program on inclusive teaching for faculty.
“The effort to make this a sustainable project can be seen in just about every facet of the building,” Grice said.

**NOT A BAD SEAT IN THE HOUSE**

Officials also said that they went to painstaking lengths to ensure that the stadium was a great experience for the fans and event spectators.

Unlike most college stadiums, there is no bleacher seating, meaning every person will have their own seat. And then, there are the sightlines, which are touted as good as any stadium ever built.

“I've managed a few venues, so I know that every venue manager says ‘there’re no bad seats in the house,’ until you get there and you’re in the nosebleeds,” Millar said. “I would challenge anyone to find a bad seat in this stadium.

“A lot of time and effort went into the sightline studies, and this stadium is much more vertical than Qualcomm, so every sightline is really good,” Millar said.

Snapdragon includes a designated student seating area at the north end zone, which Millar said is “right on top of the field.”

The goal: to bring “The Show,” SDSU’s famous student section at basketball games at Viejas Arena, to Snapdragon.

“The Show has created a vibe that has made Viejas one of the most intimidating arenas for opposing teams,” Millar said. “No opposing team wants to play there. We want to bring that vibe and energy and passion to Snapdragon.”

Other amenities that improve the fan experience include “unbelievable” LED scoreboards and video boards, interchangeable signage, internet protocol television throughout the stadium and, in one of the more contemporary changes, cashless concessions, ticketing and parking, Millar said.

“With Snapdragon, you have a stunning stadium and a fantastic product; this is a great team,” Millar said. “It is great to see San Diego embrace them, because they are very good.”

The Aztec football team has been on a tear in recent years, winning the West Division of the Mountain West conference five times since 2014 and qualifying for 11 straight bowl games, winning their last two.

“We are excited to be part of opening Snapdragon Stadium. I don’t think there’s any doubt that (the stadium) is for the San Diego community,” football coach Brady Hoke said. “When you look at the stadium amenities, you’ve got all the different things that represent San Diego State and San Diego.

**NOT JUST FOR SEVEN SATURDAYS**

If you’re not a football fan, however, that doesn’t mean you won’t be able to experience Snapdragon.

The stadium was designed for year-round use and everything from major sporting events to company retreats.

SDSU men’s and women’s soccer and women’s lacrosse will play at least one home game per season in the new digs. Snapdragon will also be home to the San Diego Wave Fútbol Club of the National Women’s Soccer League, Major League Rugby’s San Diego Legion franchise, as well as other sporting events from high school to professional sports.

“We’re hoping to use the space for fully ticketed events, social networking gatherings, using the adjacent spaces to host music festivals, farmers markets, art walks, you name it,” Grice said. “We just want to build a space that will be a hub of activity for SDSU and the San Diego community.”

“This wasn’t designed for seven Saturdays a year,” Millar added. “It transforms this space into much more of a year-round, family-oriented space for the entire community. This is for all of San Diego to enjoy all of the time.”
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY has launched “SDSU Safe,” a new, free phone-based app to address and promote personal safety both on and off campus.

AppArmor is the university’s vendor for mass emergency notifications; now, a new mobile app is being introduced for SDSU and SDSU Imperial Valley. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to download the mobile app, available for Apple and Android.

“The safety and security of our community and campus are paramount,” said SDSU President Adela de la Torre.

“In addition to enhancing safety-related workshops, training sessions and events over the recent years — including improved policies related to student conduct — we have improved our mechanisms for communicating campus emergencies and resources to students, faculty, staff and our parents and families,” de la Torre said.

SDSU Safe uses the latest mobile and GPS technologies, with enhanced features that include certain campus safety alerts as well as instant access to a range of university safety resources and reporting tools.

“In a public safety event, it is critical that we quickly and simply communicate to our students, faculty, and staff ‘where they live,’ which is on their mobile devices,” said Jerry Sheehan, vice president for Information Technology and chief information officer. “AppArmor provides us with a leading-edge app to help provide easy access to critical campus alerts and new tools, like friend walk, to help assure the safety of our students.”

All students, employees, parents and families and other community members should ensure that their current contact information is on file with SDSU by following the instructions on Urgent.sdsu.edu.

SDSU Alert provides easy and instant access to useful information, and includes the following features:

» SAFETY NOTIFICATIONS: Users can receive notifications and instructions from SDSU when the university is communicating about emergencies occurring on or near campus. Generally, notifications are deployed only when there is an imminent threat to people or infrastructure, to include the sending of Clery notices or a change in university operations.

» FRIEND WALK: Users can share their physical location with an individual through email or SMS, allowing that individual to track their progress to their destination after accepting the Friend Walk.

» MOBILE BLUE LIGHT: If you are in crisis on campus, the feature will contact the University Police Department, sharing information about your location in real time so that the department may respond to assist.

» REPORTING TOOLS: Whether it is an emergency, a crime tip or an incident, the mobile app provides mechanisms to report in real time.

» SDSU URGENT: Directly connects to the university’s urgent.sdsu.edu page, which the university launches in the event of certain emergency situations to keep the campus informed of incidents, responses and safety measures.

» MAPS AND DIRECTIONS: Access to the SDSU and SDSU Imperial Valley maps are provided, including information about the shuttle that transports students and employees between both locations.
Dear SDSU parents:

Welcome to our fall 2022 semester! Once again — as you see in this issue of News for Aztec Parents — we are welcoming an unprecedented number of students who are new to our campus. Each year we adapt to the needs of our newest students while maintaining our commitment to our continuing students. The community of care that we have developed personifies what it means to be a part of the San Diego State University community.

The efforts of SDSU’s community of care are taking place across campus and can be seen in the multitude of collaborations that include extended programs and services. Supporting student success is a balancing act between authentic care of their needs and high expectations for their performance. Students should be challenged to engage in high-impact practices, such as undergraduate research, mentoring, internships and leadership training. As the university works to reach the aspirational goals set forth in our latest strategic plan, we renew our commitment to providing access to life opportunities that allow for the social mobility of our students. We uplift students so that they realize that they are capable of taking advantage of the many academic, personal and professional opportunities available to them at SDSU.

SDSU Career Services provides students with the opportunities to define, develop and realize their career potential through partnerships, education and programming. Planning for our students’ career goals can start early, and I encourage them to:

» Activate their Handshake account.
» Make an appointment with one of our career counselors.
» Attend a career fair.
» Get connected with a mentor in the Aztec Mentor Program.
» Participate in the Career Readiness Program.
» Access the many resources available on internships and other experiential learning opportunities (read more about internships on Page 4).
» Utilize the many other resources within Career Services.

This issue of News for Aztec Parents focuses on the new and exciting ways that San Diego State University has provided students with opportunities to achieve their goals and use their voice.

As an SDSU parent, you play a crucial role in the success of your student. We know from research that students whose parents are members of the Aztec Parents Association are more likely to have higher grade point averages than other students. SDSU’s partnership with parents has shown over the years to be vital for our students’ success.

I hope this issue has provided you with the resources to stay connected as we partner in support of our students’ success.

J. Luke Wood, Ph.D.

Vice President for Student Affairs and Campus Diversity
Chief Diversity Officer
Distinguished Professor of Education

San Diego State University
### IMPORTANT DATES

*Calendar subject to change*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOV. 11</td>
<td>Veterans Day (Campus closed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOV. 23</td>
<td>No classes; campus is open. Designated residence halls* close for Thanksgiving recess at 4 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOV. 24-25</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Recess (Campus closed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOV. 27</td>
<td>Designated residence halls* reopen at noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOV. 28</td>
<td>Spring 2023 registration begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC. 12</td>
<td>Last day of classes before final exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC. 13-19</td>
<td>Final exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC. 20</td>
<td>Designated residence halls* close for Winter Recess at 10 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC. 19-JAN. 16</td>
<td>Winter Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC. 30</td>
<td>Last day of the fall semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAN. 2</td>
<td>New Year’s Day Holiday observed (Campus closed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAN. 16</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday (Campus closed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAN. 16</td>
<td>Designated residence halls* open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAN. 18</td>
<td>First day of classes for spring semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAN. 31</td>
<td>Last day to file application for May and August 2023 graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARCH 24</td>
<td>Designated residence halls* close for Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARCH 27-31</td>
<td>Spring Break (No classes; campus open)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARCH 31</td>
<td>Cesar Chavez Holiday (Campus closed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 4</td>
<td>Last day of class before final exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 5-11</td>
<td>Final exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 12</td>
<td>9-month residence halls* close for the academic year at 10 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 11</td>
<td>Commencement 2023, Imperial Valley campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 12-14</td>
<td>Commencement 2023, San Diego campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 23</td>
<td>Summer Session begins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dates are subject to change.*

To view the complete Academic Calendar go to [sdsu.edu/academiccalendar](http://sdsu.edu/academiccalendar)

For a schedule of athletic events, visit [goaztecs.com](http://goaztecs.com)

*Visit [housing.sdsu.edu](http://housing.sdsu.edu) for information about Residence Halls closures and reopenings.*

*For the latest in commencement updates, visit [commencement.sdsu.edu](http://commencement.sdsu.edu)*